
Title: The Wraith - Vol. II

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We'd found it already, or
I should say, it had found
us. Its bright frosty-blue
eyes had emerged from in
the encircling blizzard last
night, appearing as if
from nowhere out of the
gloom. I immediately took
a swing and missed, but
it didn't. It took out my
navigator with a slash
off its left claw, falling
away into the blizzard,
lost in the night forever.
In the same movement,
the beast carved up my
companion with the right
claw. There was no
chance to defend
ourselves, no chance to
fight after that. We
just had to run. It had
now taken everyone from
me. The last survivors.
My family, my home. I
couldn't even go back to
the farm, not really.
Growing food on the
frozen plains that lay in
the shadow of these
hellish mountains was
damn-near impossible.
Getting the conditions
right in the frigid
temperatures, where ice
never left the ground,
took a lifetime of
experience and my father
had not yet managed to
teach me all I needed to
know. Twenty-two years
apparently was still not
enough to be a farmer in
a world ruled by frost.
All I had now was my
goal, our goal. To kill the
beast that stole my
future.

We weren't even sure
why it was in the village.
Not in my lifetime, nor
my father's, nor his
father's before him, had
a wraith left the
mountains. He used to
tell me all about them,
as the hearth crackled
away. The stories had
grown even longer of
late, with the new mining
going on in the mountains.
They brought to the
village some new stone
fuel, and with it, the fire
burned longer than ever
— which meant the
stories just kept on
going. Stories of
monstrous creatures in
the mountains.
Bloodthirsty demons of an
old world. My father
would regale me with
tales of wraiths cutting
down weary travellers and
seasoned knights alike. He
himself had never seen
one, nor had anyone I
knew, but we all knew
what they were. The
stories were as old as
time. The miner's work
got me asking even more
questions about my
father's rules, though.
Why were they allowed
into the mountains if
they were so dangerous?
Apparently, a combination
of military convoys and
fire-wielding sorceresses
kept them safe from
both the elements and
the wraiths. I was a bit
disgruntled with the
notion that I was so
incapable when they were
not. Those feelings had
long since passed.
I wandered through the
frost-touched valley for
what seemed like an
eternity. The land was
beautiful, but barren.
There was no food, no

warmth, and no life, save
the snow-laden pine trees
that reached on for
miles. I was feeling
weaker and weaker by the
minute. I had lost our
supplies in the rush the
previous night. The pack
of food was now buried
under inches of snow. I
knew I'd never find it. I
didn't bother to search.
Between dazzling
brightness and dreary
gloom, depending on how
covered by clouds the sun
was, I started to feel my
resolve wain. I wanted to
quit, to give up and leave
this glorious, deadly place
behind. But I couldn't. I
thought of the mangled
bodies of my family. The
guilt was overwhelming.
Had I been there, not out
in the city chasing
women, I might have been
able to fend off the
beast.

The village wasn't home
to many able young men,
only three, and none had
been around when it
came. Then I thought of
my companion in the cave,
the frost surely still
biting at his quickly
freezing corpse. The guilt
was worse still. As they
wept over their families,
my heart filled with rage.
I felt the anger wash
over me, masking the pain
— I knew that now, as
the cold bit at my own
heart and began to thaw
the fiery anger that
burned inside.
I had to almost drag our
navigator into the
mountains, and now he lay
dead within them. My
companion was only
slightly more willing. The
wraith took both his wife
and daughter, but even he
wouldn't have set foot

on these treacherous
slopes if I hadn't driven
him to it. I goaded him,
playing off his torment. I
had to kill the beast, it
was the only way to
unburden my guilty
conscience.

Was the wraith that
attacked us last night
the same that cut down
the villagers? It was
impossible to say. They all
looked identical,
apparently. We didn't
know exactly how many
were living in the
mountains, but we did
know was they were
mindless killers and even
if I slew the wrong one,
I'd redeem myself by
culling a true vision of
evil. Wraiths were ancient
creatures, powered only
by a lust for death.
I was always told that
they didn't consume the
flesh of their prey, they
took the very life from
them and fed off that
instead. I didn't believe
it, and I was still not
sure. Except for the
massive slashes across his
torso where the wraith
had cleaved him as he
worked in the fields, my
Father looked as he ever
did when I found him. I
expected the draining of
life to look more
dramatic, but maybe it
wasn't something you
could see.